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ABSTRACT

As part of two research projects on schools for the mentally retarded and their employment possibilities, this report describes the regular and special education systems in the Netherlands, examines the situation of adults who attended the special schools, and discusses segregative circumstances in the Netherlands. The first chapter provides an overview of the Dutch education system at all levels including the role of the Ministry of Education, private and public-authority schools, compulsory education requirements, and advisory and consultative bodies. The second chapter looks at special primary and secondary education including special schools, entry to a special school, and the extent of special education. The third chapter considers living and daycare alternatives for mentally handicapped persons before and after the school period. Covered are: assistance after the birth of a handicapped child and early identification; living and daycare alternatives; the mentally handicapped and labor (the sheltered workshop); and financing the system. The final chapter offers some critical notes focusing on the structure of the system and problems within the system (e.g., difficulties of student placement, waiting lists, needs of ethnic groups), and living and daycare alternatives (e.g., shortage of placement possibilities). Includes 36 references. (DB)

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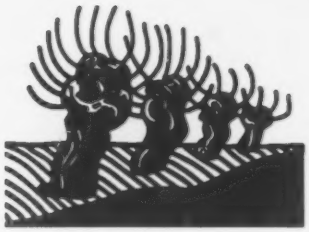

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Education in the Netherlands

An outline of regular and special education focusing the situation of pupils and adults with disabilities

CLAUDIA A.-M. HETTINGA

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EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

An outline of regular and special education
focusing the situation of pupils and adults with disabilities

Claudia A.-M. Hettinga

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As a part of two research projects on schools for the mentally retarded and the labour market investigations on parallel situations in other countries are carried out. In this report the school system in the Netherlands is described including both regular and special education. Since the projects also are studying the situation after school, a description of living conditions for adults with disabilities is included. The report also offers a critical standpoint on segregative features both within and outside the school system.

Keywords: Disabilities, mental retardation, the Netherlands, school systems, special education, work-life.

PREFACE

During the last decade two research projects concerning people with mental retardation have been performed at the School of Education in Malmö, Sweden. One of them, *The function of schools for the mentally retarded*, was carried out 1982-1989, and the other, *Schools for the mentally retarded and the labour market*, started in 1989 and is supposed to continue till 1992.

The overall purpose of the two projects has been to identify, describe and analyse mechanisms in and outside school which prevent or impede access by former pupils of schools for the mentally retarded to the labour market and to an integrated adult life. The projects have also been aiming at establishing a scientific foundation for proposals concerning changes/improvements to instruction in and organisation of these schools as well as recommendations to "the social partners" at the labour market. This in order to contribute to the fulfillment of the motto of the UN international year of the handicapped in 1981: "Full participation and equality".

There has also been an ambition to make comparisons with parallel situations in other countries, and, within the framework of the two projects, the living conditions for people with mental retardation has been studied in Canada, Germany (GDR and FRG), Hungary, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and in the United States.

In this article one of the collaborators of the projects, Claudia Hettinga, reports her investigation of the situation in the Netherlands, including the general and the special school. In addition there is a description of the conditions of adult former students of the special school, as well as a critical view of segregative circumstances.

Jerry Rosenqvist
project leader

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1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE DUTCH EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this chapter an overview will be given of the education system in the Netherlands. The following matters are described and discussed:

in 1.1 various schooltypes of primary and secondary education,
in 1.2 the financing of the system,
in 1.3 the differences between private and public-authority schools,
in 1.4 compulsory education and the entry of a pupil to a school,
in 1.5 the support structure,
in 1.6 advisory and consultative bodies and umbrella organisations.

1.1 An overview of the various schooltypes

The educational career of children starts as a rule at age four with the primary school. An exception is made by the group of children which, because of special needs, goes directly to a school for special education (see 1.2 and chapter 2).

When the primary school is finished, a lot of possibilities appear for secondary education. The choice depends on, among other things, learning performance and preference of parents and pupils. With the help of the scheme, figure 1, an impression of the alternatives can be obtained. Below, the different schools which are mentioned in the scheme will be described in short.

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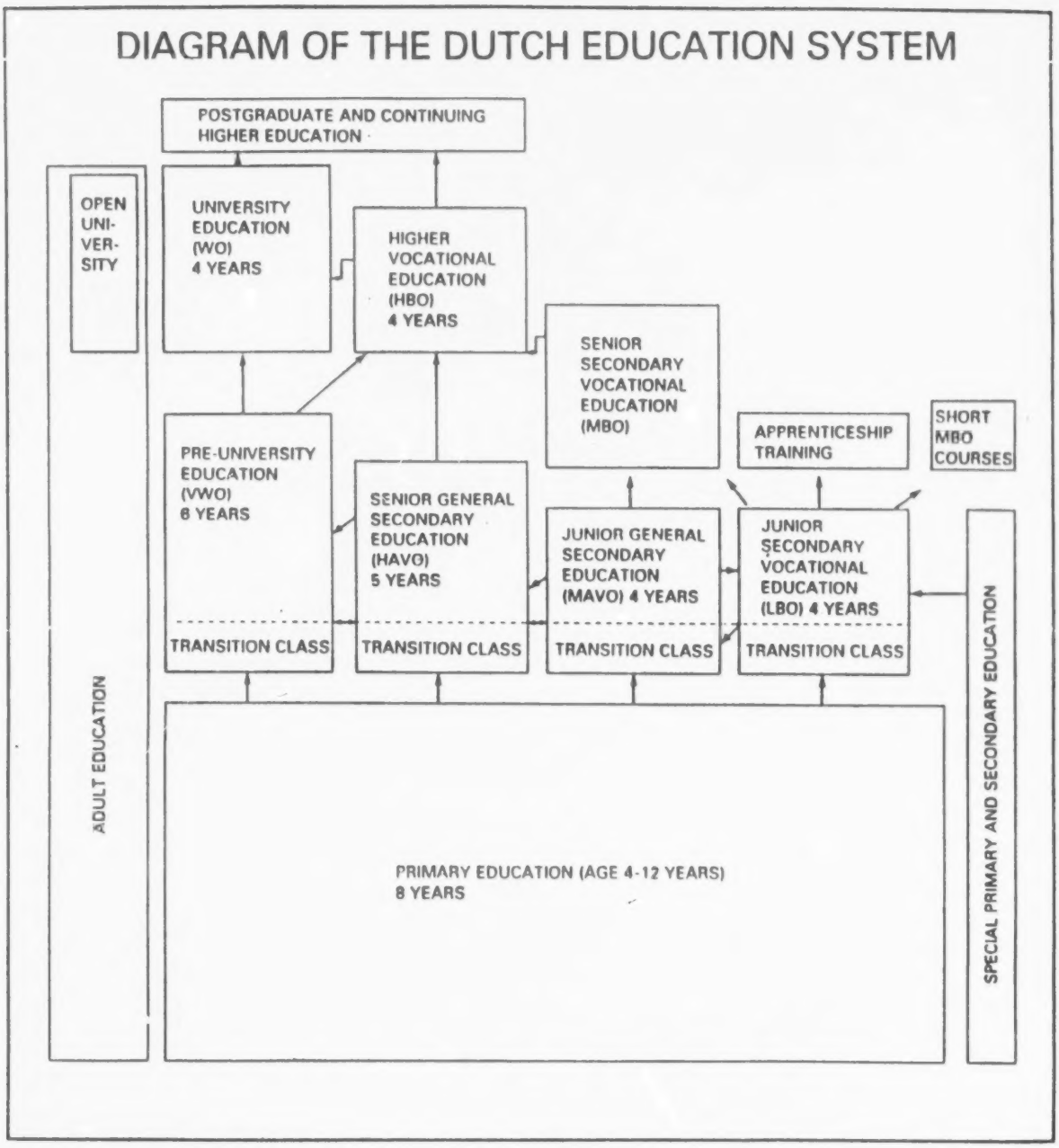
DIAGRAM OF THE DUTCH EDUCATION SYSTEM
POSTGRADUATE AND CONTINUING HIGHER EDUCATION
OPEN UNI-VER-SITY
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (WO) 4 YEARS
HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (HBO) 4 YEARS
SENIOR SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (MBO)
APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING
SHORT MBO COURSES
PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION (VWO) 6 YEARS
SENIOR GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (HAVO) 5 YEARS
JUNIOR GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION (MAVO) 4 YEARS
JUNIOR SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (LBO) 4 YEARS
TRANSITION CLASS
TRANSITION CLASS
TRANSITION CLASS
TRANSITION CLASS
ADULT EDUCATION
PRIMARY EDUCATION (AGE 4-12 YEARS) 8 YEARS
SPECIAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

(Ministry of Education and Science, 1988)

Figure 1.

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1.1.1 Primary education

Since 1985 the primary school or the basic school exists in the Netherlands. This form of education is for children from age 4 to age 12 and focuses on the emotional, creative and intellectual development and the acquisition of necessary knowledge and social, cultural, and physical skills.

Before 1985 a distinction was made between the nursery school (for children from age 4 to 6) and the primary school or lower school (as it was called before, for children from age 6 to 12). These schools have been integrated with the goal to come to a continuous developmental process for the young child.

The primary school deals with the following educational content:
- sensory and physical excercise,
- the Dutch language,
- mathematics,
- the English language,
- geography, history and nature,
- expressive activities,
- stimulation of social skills,
- stimulation of healthy behaviour.

The teaching within schools is based on a school work plan. The framework for this plan is given by the Ministery of Education while the actual content is planned by the particular school. The plan gives an overview of the school organisation and the content of the education.

1.1.2 Special primary and secondary education

Special education is given to children who cannot follow the education given on the primary school. This might depend on mentally and/or physical handicaps, social/emotional problems or learning difficulties.

Depending on school choice and handicap a child can start with the special school when it has reached the age of 3-6. More information about special primary and secondary education will be given in chapter 2.

1.1.3 Secondary education

When pupils have finished the primary school, they have to go to a school for secondary education, the education for pupils from age 12 to 18 (see also 1.4).

Within secondary education four main streams (with different levels where "a" is the highest and "d" the lowest) are offered:

a) *pre-university education (VWO)* : encloses the atheneum and the grammar school and serves as a preparation for scientific education at the university. This school lasts six years,

b) *senior general secondary education (HAVO):* serves as a preparation for higher vocational training and lasts five years,

c) *junior general secondary education (MAVO):* serves as a preparation for intermediate vocational training and lasts four years,

d) *lower vocational education (LBO) :* serves as a preparation for a profession and lasts four years. The first two years consist mainly of general education, the last two years consist more of vocational training. Among other things, a choice can be made out of technical, economic-administrative, domestic and agrarian directions. As in other schools the teaching takes place in the classroom. If a pupil has difficulties learning the teaching material however, more individual teaching can be obtained. When this is the case, the education is called *individualised vocational education.* Another alternative in this stream is the possibility to follow the *elementary general secondary education,* which means that general education is taught. This takes two years.

The first or transition year at a school for secondary education serves as a first orientation, to see which school and what level is the best for the pupil. After the transition year a definitive choice has to be made.

It is the ambition to introduce a *basic education* at all schools for secondary education before 1997. This means that basic education will be given to all pupils in the first three years of a secondary school. A definitive choice for a secondary school then has to be made after these three years. The aim of basic education is to raise the standard of the education, to postpone the moment of schoolchoice and to achieve more equality between the pupils. The introduction of this will start in 1991.

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1.1.4 Education possibilities after the school for secondary (general) education

When the school for secondary (general) education has been completed (one of the four mainstreams), a choice can be made between various alternatives for further education with different levels, again depending on the wishes of the pupil and his schoolperformances.

a) After pre-university education (VWO) pupils can go to the university to get scientific education. *Scientific education* lasts, since 1982, four to six years. In 1982 scientific education has been divided in a so-called "two phases structure". The first phase consists of scientific education and leads to a masters degree. The second phase consists of postgraduate and continuing higher education. This phase is available for a small percentage of the graduated students and is intended for doctoral research or professional education (e.g. dentists, medical doctors). This phase lasts 1-4 years. It should be noted that a pupil without a diploma of the school for preuniversity education can also be accepted at the university after a success full special entrance examination.
b) Students who finished the senior general secondary education (HAVO) can continue with pre-university education (VWO) or *higher vocational education (HBO)*. This school combines theoretical and practical knowledge and lasts four years. A choice can be made between:
- agricultural courses,
- teacher training courses,
- technical courses,
- commercial courses,
- social work and community education courses,
- health care courses,
- courses in arts.

When this first period is finished successfully a small amount of students can continue with the postgraduate and continuing higher education (the second phase of scientific education).
c) After junior general secondary education (MAVO) pupils can continue with senior general secondary education (HAVO) or *senior secondary vocational education (MBO)*. In this school you can learn a profession in a lot of different areas. The study lasts four years.

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d) After the school for junior secondary vocational education (LBO) pupils can continue with junior general secondary education (MAVO), senior secondary vocational education (MBO), an*apprenticeship training* or *the short courses of he senior secondary vocational education,* depending on the motivation and the learning capacity of the pupil. *The apprenticeship training* is a training in a profession in which classroom knowledge is combined with practical experience in company. This training can be followed with or without a diploma of the junior secondary vocational education (LBO) and is accessible for pupils who have reached the age of 16. The basic education of this training lasts 2-3 years. *The short courses of the senior secondary vocational education* are available for pupils who have reached the age of 16. It is a full time education in school for 2 or 3 years. The practical situation is however important during the lessons.

A pupil who finishes the *special primary school* can continue with junior secondary vocational education (LBO) or special secondary education. This is however not a rule, and is very dependent on the possibilities of the individual pupil (see chapter 2 for more information).

In these sections the most common alternatives of transfer from one school to another have been shown. The arrows in the scheme, figure 1, show all the possibilities. If a pupil wants, he can start with the junior secondary vocational training and go on until university education is reached. This is in the practice of the Dutch educational situation of today however more theoretical than practical.

Especially scientific-, higher- and senior vocational education are at the moment very much discussed in the Dutch society. Because of all kinds of economical cutbacks a lot will have to be changed. Among other things a shortening of studytime, the merging with schools, lowering of the grants and a lowering of the maximum time allowed to study are at issue.

1.1.5 Adult education

Besides the education alternatives (for children and youngsters) mentioned above, there is also the possibility for adults to attend educational programs, called the *adult education*.

The content can vary from basic education (to learn how to write, to read and to calculate) to senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). Next to that, there is the possibility for adults to attend a scientific study. They can start with their subject of interest at the *"open university"*. The adult student can pick out courses of interest, but can also attend a complete study, leading to a university degree (e.g. Master of Science). The study at this institute is mainly carried out in the form of home study.

1.2 The Ministry of Education and the financing of the system

The education system is run by the Minister of Education and Science. The supervision on education is performed by the education inspectorate and the many public servants who work for them. The financing of the education is on expense of the state.

Participants in education pay tuition fees when they have reached the age of 16. For a day school for secondary education this amount was fl.1030 (3090 SEK) in the schoolyear 1988-1989. For higher vocational education and the university the amounts were fl.1400 (4200 SEK) and fl.1750 (5250 SEK) respectively. The fees for higher vocational education and the university will probably rise with fl.500 (1500 SEK) in the next few years.

Pupils up to and including the age of 17 can get a government's subsidy, depending on economical situation of the parent(s)/tutor(s). Students from age 18 to 30 can apply for the financial aid to student's act. Every student who is enrolled for full-time secondary or higher education is entitled to a basic grant, which is not repayable (about fl.590 (1790 SEK) per month for a student who lives on his own). Depending on their parent's economical situation students may moreover claim supplementary financial assistance, partly in the form of an interest bearing loan.

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1.3 Private and public-authority schools

In the Netherlands private schools, which are set up on private initiative and run by societies or foundations, and public-authority schools established and run by the government, can be discerned. Private schools are often founded on the basis of religious beliefs (e.g. catholic or protestant) or other convictions (e.g. Montessori, Jenaplan, anthroposofic).

The central government is the authority for state schools, the municipal authorities for local schools and the schoolboards for private schools.

The possibility to provide education is arranged by law. Financially there is an equal treatment of private and state schools. All costs are payed by the government.

Private schools and public-authority schools are funded according to the same criteria. Except for these criteria the proper authorities and the teachers of a private school have a great deal of autonomy.

The foundation of a school is related to the amount of pupils. Exemption of the minimum amount of pupils, necessary for the establishment of a school, can be given. For example when a community thinks that it is important to create the opportunity to follow education on a public school. This can be the case in a small protestant community, where there is already a private (protestant) school but where not-protestants also want to be able to follow public education.

The public authority school is required to give education with respect for everyone's believe or philosophy of life. However, private schools are not allowed to refuse pupils because of belief or philosophy of life if there is no possibility to follow public education within a reasonable distance of the pupil's house. The concerning pupil cannot be obliged to follow the lessons in religion or philosophy of life at this school.

To give an idea of the division between private, and public-authority schools could be mentioned that (van Kemenade et al., 1986): 70% of the schools for primary and secondary education are private of which 30% are Catholic, 30% are Protestant-Christian and 10% private non-denominational (e.g. Dalton, Montessori, Jenaplan).

1.4 Compulsory education and the entry of a pupil to a school

Since august 1985 there is a new law. As from this time a child is of school age the first schoolday of the month after the month in which the child has reached the age of five until the 16th year of his/her life. A child is however allowed to go to school when it has reached the age of four.

Everyone is obliged to follow 12 years of education on a dayschool. After the 12th schoolyear a pupil is still partly of school age. This means that the pupil is obliged to go to school, at least two days a week, for a year (this can be combined with a job). After 13 years of day time education a pupil is not of school age anymore. The implementation of all this is supervised by the staff of the local authorities (Mayor and Aldermen).

All pupils starting school are allowed to go to any school for primary education their parents want them to. When a pupil from the primary school is presented to a school for secondary education it doesn't mean that this school automatically admits the pupil. The school to which the pupil is presented, is obliged to ask for advise from the school of which the pupil is coming. The director of this school has to write an educational report about the pupil, after consulting the teaching staff. The parents of the pupil get a copy of this report.

The admittance to a primary school of a pupil who comes from a school for special education is only possible after consultation with the parents and the authorities of the concerning schools.

1.5 The support structure

The support structure for education is directed at maintenance, improvement and systematic development of education and to an increasement of the problem solving capacity of a school. The support structure gives services on pedagogical, didactical, psychological and school organisational areas.

There are general and specialised support organisations. The general support organisations support the school as a whole, the specialised organisations operate in specific subsectors of education. The general support organisations are among others:

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1) The educational advisory centres: they give educational supportive services to primary and special schools. Tasks can be the guidance of the school as a whole, developmental- and advisery activities, evaluation, pupil supportive activities, the development of new views and methods and to take measures for future developments in education.
2) The national pedagogical centres: (with or without a religious or philosophy of life basis) give services to schools for secondary education and the schools for teacher training. These centres do not support individual pupils.

Among specialised support organisations can be mentioned:
1) The foundation for educational research (SVO): this organisation stimulates, coordinates and supports educational research.
2) The national institute for curriculum development (SLO): this institute develops master teaching plans or alternative models for school work plans and sections for school work plans for primary, secondary and special schools and teacher training colleges.
3) The national institute for educational measurement (CITO): this institute develops tests for primary, secondary and special education and teacher training colleges. They measure the knowledge of pupils and students.

Besides these regular institutions, there are firms run by private initiative, for example private advisery offices (educational consultants). They serve education and schools, either with or without recognition and subsidy.

1.6 Advisory and consultative bodies, umbrella organisations

Every school has a participation council. In this council parents, staff and elder pupils who follow secondary education are represented. The council has co-decision and advisory powers. Besides that, there are also special organisations for parents.

In the field of education there are further on many advisory organisations, consultative bodies, umbrella organisations and unions for teachers.

The advisory councils give advise to the Minister concerning policy making. By means of the consultative bodies the Minister decides whether or not there is enough basis to go ahead with an intended policy. The umbrella organisations promote the interests of the four main groupings in Dutch education, as there are a Catholic, a Protestant, a private non-denominational and a public one.

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2 SPECIAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

In this chapter the special primary and secondary education will be discussed.

In 2.1 some general information about special education is given,
in 2.2 all types of special schools are described shortly,
in 2.3 the entry of a pupil to a school for special education and the team, working on a special school are at issue,
in 2.4 some statistics are shown.

2.1 General information about special education

There is an extensive system for special education in the Netherlands. Simply said, the foundation of the system was laid in the Law for compulsory education from 1901. Because of this, a group of children appeared which could not follow the compulsory education and for whom other possibilities had to be looked for. These were found in separate classes and schools.

In 1920 special education was arranged by a law, which formed the basis for the differentiated system of today. In 1985 the Special Education Interim Act (ISOVSO) came into force. This act is intended to be in force for ten years. In this period there has to be decided whether or not special education must be arranged in a different way and in a separate law.

At the moment 15 different types of special schools can be distinguished in the Netherlands (see 2.2). These schools are for children who can not follow the education in an ordinary primary or secondary school because of mental, physical, social or emotional handicaps or learning problems.

Depending on schooltype, children can start with this education when they are of age 3-6 and can stay there until the age of 20.

The purpose of special education (primary and secondary) is:"to stimulate the continuous development of children who need special pedagogical and educational treatment" (v.Kemenade et al.,1986). Special education is

aimed at (in combination with medical and psychological treatment) the creation of an optimal ortho pedagogical climate in which the pupil with his handicap can develop as well as possible.

What is "special" about special education is therefore to give suitable help to pupils with similar problems and handicaps.

Special schools can establish the following departments:
- a department for children at a tender age (age 3 to 6),
- a main department (age 6/7-12/13),
- a department for secondary education (age 12/13-18/20),
- a department for multiple handicapped pupils.

Not all special schools have established all these departments, some have only one or two of them.

In general children can attend a school for special education when they have reached the age of three. An exception has to be made for the schools for mentally handicapped children, severely maladjusted children and children with learning and behaviour problems (see 2.2). They can start school at age six.

The groupsize in special schools is smaller compared to regular schools. Groupsize for the departments for small children, secondary education and multiple handicapped children is 7/8 pupils. For the main department this is 12.

Special primary education (taught at the main department) has almost the same curriculum as the ordinary schools for primary education (see chapter 1). Only in the special school the english language is not compulsory and domestic activities can be added.

In special secondary education most of the time the junior secondary vocational program (LBO) or junior general secondary program(MAVO) (see chapter 1) is taught, depending on the abilities of the pupil.

Three functions can be discerned on special secondary education:

a) a parallel function: special schools which prepare the pupils for a regular diploma,
b) the final education function: schools which prepare (a part of) the pu - pils for the labour market or for special care (at home or at a sheltered workshop). No diploma is connected to this kind of education,
c) a connection funtion: these schools prepare the pupils for placement in ordinary secondary education. This kind of education can be seen a common course that takes one or two years.

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Most of the schools for special secondary education fulfil several func - tions (mentioned above) at the same time.

It has to be noted, that not all the pupils who follow special primary education also go to a special school for secondary education. Some of them go to a regular school for secondary education.

With regard to the content of education, the following subjects must always appear in the curriculum of special secondary education:

- Dutch,
- history, civics,
- geography,
- social studies,
- arithmetic and mathematics,
- music,
- drawing,
- handicrafts,
- play and sport,
- at least two more subjects that are given in regular secondary general education.

Teachers, working at a school for special education, often have followed a special training for this, after the basic teacher training. This special training is however not (yet) compulsory. Some special schools give the teachers an extra training within the school. This happens for example at some schools for the deaf.

Teaching in a special school is structured by a school work plan. This plan gives an overview of the organisation and the content of the school. Also use is made of activity plans. An activity plan gives information about and instructions for a specific child.

Many schools for special education have a regional position. This means that most of the pupils come and go with special busses or taxi's.

2.2 Schools for special eduction

The 15 school types that can be discerned are:

1) the school for the deaf,

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2) the school for children with impaired hearing,
3) the school for children with severe speech disorders,
4) the school for the blind,
5) the school for partially sighted children,
6) the school for physically handicapped children (mytyl),
7) the school for chronically sick children,
8) the school for children in hospitals,
9) the school for mentally handicapped children (MLK),
10) the school for severely mentally handicapped children (ZMLK),
11) the school for severely maladjusted children (ZMOK),
12) the school for children with learning and behaviour problems (LOM),
13) children in schools attached to peadological institutes,
14) the school for children with multiple handicaps (tyltyl),
15) the school for infants with developmental difficulties.

The school for the deaf

In this school children are placed who are deaf before the speech development has been completed. They can visit the school when they have reached the age of 3. In the department for children at a tender age the main goal is to start and carry on communication. At the main department the curriculum for the regular primary school is followed. Besides that everything is aimed towards the activation of speech and the substantive use of that, to learn how to read lips, to write and to read. Some schools learn the pupils to use sign language.

When education at the main department has been finished, it is possible to follow secondary education at a special department of the school for the deaf. Another possibility is to go to a regular school for secondary education with the assistance of personnel from the deaf institute.

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The schools for children with impaired hearing and severe speech disorders

Since 1913 there are special schools for children with impaired hearing. Since 1934 this school is also accessable for children with severe speech problems, because of the fact that this group often combine their handicap with hearing problems. At this school subdepartments can be discerned, based on the distinguished handicaps.

As well the department for children at a tender age as the main department have an important accent on speech and language development. The curriculum of the ordinary primary school is followed, with the aim to - wards the individual.

The school for the blind

This school is for children who can not follow regular education because of their blindness. They have a normal intelligence but need extra re - sources which are not available in a regular school.

The education is aimed at (among other things) learning how to deal with the handicap, the training of non-visual senses, learning of braille and stick walking. The main goal of this education can be described as living independently in the society.

At the department for children at a tender age stimulating and struc - tured activities are offered. At the main department the curriculum for ordinary primary education is offered in a way which makes the material available for blind people. Secondary education can be followed at a regular school or a special school for the blind, depending on the abilities and the wishes of the pupil.

When a pupil leaves the school aftercare can be claimed. This help can be given when an ex-pupil is e.g. looking for a job.

The school for partially sighted children

Since 1950 there is a special school for children with an impaired sight. Before that time this group got their education at the school for the blind.

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This changed because one experienced a difference in the so-called assist - ance-question.

When a child is partially sighted, this means that there is a disturbance in one or more parts which form "the sight". Yet visual information can be obtained. For every individual child the consequences of this partly sight for the education are searched. In school the child is taught to use these parts of the sight which still function.

Again several departments can be discerned at this school. The pupils can follow secondary education in regular or in special schools.

The school for physically handicapped children (mytyl)

This school takes care of children with various physical handicaps.

Besides teaching (where the curriculum for the ordinary primary school is followed) rehabilitation forms an important part of the daily school program. Teaching and rehabilitation have to be combined in a balanced way.

An important part of the education is aimed at the improvement of self responsibility and the independence of the pupil. Because of the physical care most children need, a class-assistant is available in all the classrooms. In most cases a department for multiple handicapped children is present at this school.

The school for chronically ill children

This can be a boardingschool or a school connected with a nursing home. This school is for children who have to leave home for a specific period of time, because of their illness. Besides a physical disease, most children also have problems at home and/or at school which makes it necessary for them to leave home for a while.

The school is aimed towards treatment, just like the institution it is connected with. There is a direct contact between the school and the institute, they support each other. Both are aimed at the return of the pupil in its own environment.

This school has a large turnover of pupils. They can be announced, hospitalized and dismissed during the whole year.

The school for children in hospitals

This is a school, connected to a hospital. It is aimed at pedagogical guid - ance and the continuation of the learning process.

A child is allowed to follow this education after the parents and the medical doctor have given permittance. Education can be followed when the treatment period in the hospital is at least three weeks. If the treatment period is shorter, the child can participate as a guest pupil.

At the school there is an enormous variety of teaching levels. Teaching takes place individually or in small groups. Teaching time has a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of three hours a day, depending on the condition of the pupil.

The school for mentally handicapped children (MLK)

This school is for children who have structural problems with the ac - quisition and processing of information. In addition to diminished intel - lectual powers there is a decrease in social skills. The intellectual development goes slower and in a different way compared to children in the same age. Moeilijk Lerende Kinderen (MLK: difficult learning children) reach later or only partly the level of abstract thinking.

Intelligence tests have been an important factor to decide wether or not a child can be called "mentally handicapped". The I.Q boundaries which are related to this concept are 50/55-80 (the use of these tests are under discussion at the moment).

Despite their intellectual level it is expected that this group of children can live independantly in the society as adults. The education at this school is aimed at the creation of a pedagogical climate in which the pupil can develop. The school works at the development of the pupil's abilities and self-consciousness. The subject material is offered not only in a school-like way but also in playful situations.

The school for severely mentally handicapped children (ZMLK)

This school is for severely mentally handicapped children. The I.Q boundaries which are related to this group of children are 49-30. Before a child is placed at this school, social- and educational skills and the extent of independence are examined.

The school is aimed towards the development of the pupil. Teaching is especially aimed at learning by doing. The main point is to experience and to deal with concrete objects. An important part of teaching is the training of independent behaviour and the performance of functional tasks.

At this school the curriculum of the regular primary school is not be - ing followed. In the ISOVSO Act (see 2.1) the following areas are men - tioned:

- sensory training,
- gymnastics,
- stimulation of social independence, for example the training of behaviour in traffic-situations,
- stimulation of healthy behaviour,
- expressive activities e.g. related to music and nature.

Besides the teacher a teachers' assistant also works in the classroom.

A school for severely mentally handicapped children, or very difficult learning children (Zeer Moeilijk Lerende Kinderen) as they are called in the Netherlands, can be connected to an institution for mentally handi - capped persons or it can work independently.

When the pupils have reached the age of 16 future possibilities are con- sidered (see chapter 3).

The school for severely maladjusted children (ZMOK)

This school is for pupils with severe social/emotional and behavioural problems. This can be caused by a physical disturbance. This child is un - certain towards its own functioning, it can be a matter of negligence and alienation.

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When a child is placed in this special school, the first three to six months serve as an observational period to obtain more information about the problems of the child.

The school is aimed at a complete acceptance of the child as it is. Teaching is directed at the increasement of the own responsibility of the pupil, for example by making rules and appointments. Besides the curriculum of the regular primary school, creative activities are important during schooltime.

The school has a preventative task as far as the future of the pupils is concerned. This group of children is considered to be a high risk group for dropping out of society when guidance is not given. If possible, the parents play an important role within the guidance of their child.

Many children live in an institution connected to the school.

Schools attached to paedological institutes

This kind of school is associated with an university from which guidance can be obtained.

This school is also called "the observation school". It is for children whose educational- and upbringing problems are very complex and/or unfathomable. For this group of children it is not clear which kind of school suits them best although tests have been done. Children visiting this school can be highly gifted or slow learners.

Every year the child is assessed in the same way as the admittance assessment (see 2.3). On account of the results an activity plan is drawn up as far as possible in view of the problems.

The school is aimed at an optimal guidance of the complete personality of a child with (severe) developmental problems with the help of observation and pedagogical treatment. School learning can not be seen as the first goal. A care home can be connected to this school.

The school for children with learning and behaviour problems (LOM)

Children visiting this school have a more or less normal intelligence but disappointing school results.

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This school is one of the biggest special schools at the moment and still growing (see 2.4 and chapter 4).

Most of the pupils first tried to follow education at a regular primary school but got such problems there that special treatment was needed. At this school pupils can work in their own tempo and on their own level at the same curriculum taught at the regular primary school.

The school for children with multiple handicaps (tyltyl)

Children attending this school have two or more handicaps, for example a physical and a mental handicap.

There can be indepent tyltyl schools or tyltyl departments in other special schools, for example at a school for the deaf or for the physically handicapped.

The teaching is aimed at the individual pupil working on his own level, as independent as possible. After consultation with the competent authority and the school board the Minister decides what has to be taught.

Besides school learning and the stimulation of independent behaviour, rehabilitation is an important part of the daily program.

The school for infants with developmental difficulties

This pre-school period is for children from age 4 to 7. This education is given at special departments of schools for mentally handicapped, severely mentally handicapped and children with learning and behaviour problems. It is thus not a seperate special school, but a special department within the special schools mentioned above.

It is a kind of observational class. It has not always been decided yet which special school is the best for the child. It has been clear however, that the child needs a special treatment because of behavioural or social-emotional problems.

It is important to notice that 15 different kinds of special education are distinguished. However, these 15 different kinds are spread over 13 special schools, as is shown with the school or department for infants with

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developmental difficulties and the school for children with impaired hearing and severe speech disorders.

2.3 The entry of a pupil to a special school

A child can only be placed at a school for special education after a board of experts has decided that placement is best for the child.

All schools for special education have such a committee in which different experts (working at the school) judge the admittance. Among others an educationalist, a psychologist, a medical doctor, a social worker and the director can be part of this committee, depending on schooltype. Every expert examines the child in his or her field after which a collective decision is made. Often tests and observations are worked out and in most cases the social worker visits the parents at home. The entrance examination must give an answer to the question whether or not the child belongs at the concerning school, if the school can meet the needs of the child. The conclusions of the entrance examination are discussed with the parents, after which a joint decision is made. Two years after the entrance examination, a follow up examination has to be made to check if placement is still necessary.

A child can be referred to a school for special education by a regular school for primary education or go there directly when it has reached the school-age.

2.4 The recent extent of special education

To get an impression of the recent extent of special education some numbers are given.

In schoolyear 1988-1989 there were (CBS, 1989):

- 1,533,667 pupils in primary and special education:
- 1,428,577 (93%) went to a regular school for primary education (722,653 boys and 705,924 girls),
- 105,090 pupils (7%), went to a school for special education (71,474 boys and 33,616 girls).

(Especially the difference between boys and girls attending special education is noticable!)

To show the growth of special education, a comparison is made with schoolyear 1975.

In schoolyear 1975 there were (CBS, 1989; Kramer et al., 1988):

- 2,055,625 pupils in primary and special education:
- 1,972,000 (96%) went to a school for regular primary education,
- 83,625 (4%) went to a school for special education.

Although the total amount of pupils in 1989 thus decreased with over half a million pupils (-25,8%), the total amount of pupils attending a school for special education increased with 21,465 (+25,7%). This means a relative growth from 4% to 7% of the total amount of pupils. Recent numbers show that this grow of special education has not stopped in 1990 (Volkskrant, 1991). This will be discussed in chapter 4.

To give an impression of the division of pupils within special education some numbers are given in table 2.1.

Again a comparison is made between schoolyear 1975 and 1988/1989 to show which schools grew especially the last 15 years.

As shown, most of the pupils attending special education go to a school for (severely) handicapped children or to a school for children with learning and behaviour problems.

The growth of special education in the last 15 years comes for the largest part at the expense of the schools for children with learning and behaviour problems (LOM) and maladjusted children. This will be discussed in chapter 4.

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Table 2.1 Amount of pupils in special schools and growth in percent 1988/89 and 1975. (See 2.2 above.)

	1988/1989	1975	%
MLK (mentally handicapped)	33,200	33,096	-
ZMLK (severe mentally handicapped)	7,314	8,494	-13.2
LOM (children with learning- and behaviour problems)	43,167	24,950	73.0
The deaf	894	1,422	-37.1
Impaired hearing	4,097	3,043	34.6
Speech disorders	334	(no numbers available)	
The blind	219	581	-62.3
Partially sighted	295	546	-46.0
Physical handicapped	3,444	3,652	-5.7
Pupils in hospitals	882	581	52.0
The chronically ill	2,986	3,099	-3.6
Maladjusted children	5,486	3,476	58.0
Children at peadological institutes	1,096	685	60.0
Multiple handicapped	1,676	(no numbers available)	
total	105,090	83,625	25.7

(Sources: CBS, 1989; Kramer et al., 1988.)

3 LIVING AND DAYCARE ALTERNATIVES FOR MENTALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS BEFORE AND AFTER THE SCHOOL PERIOD

Where do mentally handicapped persons live and which daycare possib - ilities are there for them in the Netherlands?

In this chapter an overview will be given of the (im)possibilities for mentally handicapped people, that is people who need guidance to a larger or lesser degree because of a mental handicap. The following issues will be described and discussed here:

in 3.1 early recognition and assistance after birth,
in 3.2 living and daycare alternatives for mentally handicapped adults and children,
in 3.3 mentally handicapped persons and the labour market: the sheltered workshop,
in 3.4 the financing of the system.

3.1 Assistance after the birth of a handicapped child and early recognition

With the birth of a child several people and institutes are involved now - adays. This can be the family doctor, the midwife, the health visitor and the hospital. After birth a child will come into contact with the infant welfare centre. At this place the baby is examined regularly. It is also the place where parents can ask questions about the development of their child. In case parents have doubts most of the time this will be the place to express them at first.

A recent development that ought to be mentioned here is the develop - ment of the *early recognition-team:* early recognition of an existing, sup- posted or imminent developmental disturbance concerning children from age zero to seven. It emphasizes the importance to see (imminent) prob - lems on time so measures can be taken, which give the child and the fam - ily the chance to develop in the best way.

The team working with early recognition consists of people who work in the field of prevention and assistance for young children e.g. a paedia - trician, a developmental psychologist and an educationalist. The team has the task to diagnose the child and to arrange suitable assistance.

Besides that they work on a better cooperation and coordination be - tween the assistance organisations for young children. The creation of the early recognition team serves partly as an answer to the many complaints of parents with a (mentally) handicapped child who wanted just one pro - fessional place (instead of going from one place to another) where they could go in case of doubts or questions.

Early recognition can also be seen as a consequence of the normaliza- tion thougt: the idea that a(mentally) handicapped child can better be raised within the family in stead of at an institute.

Parents themselves can contact the team for early recognition or they can, for example, be referred by the family doctor.

When a mental handicap has been concluded the family with the handi- capped child can visit the *Social Pedagogical Service* (SPD). This institute is aimed at social service to the parents, the child or the whole family. Besides that, they give general information and advise about e.g. insur- ances and financial matters.

In addition to the social workers there is also a team of a medical doc - tor, a psychologist and an educationalist working at this institute.

Within the SPD a department for Practical Pedagogical Home Assist - ance can be distinguished. This department is aimed at the assistance with pedagogical questions within the family with a mentally handicapped child.

The SPD cooperates with other assistance organisations, among others the parent organisations, where parents can go to for information, help and support. People can make use of the SPD during the entire lifetime of the mentally handicapped person.

3.2 living and daycare alternatives for mentally handicapped adults and children

A distinction can be made between living and daycare alternatives for adults and children.

3.2.1 The alternatives for children up to age 18

As of age 2 1/2 a child can go to a *day care centre* for mentally handi - capped children. They can stay there until they have reached the age of 18. This centre takes care of children (who live with their parents) dur - ing day time and is aimed at the best possible development of the child.

The admittance criteria are broad which means that a lot of different "mental levels" between the children can be found. Groups in the daycare centre are put together on basis of age. Often there is also a special group for multiple handicapped. There is one care-taker per five children. Be - sides care-takers also physiotherapists, speech therapists, educationalists, psychologists and social workers can work here.

When a child enters the day care centre two possibilities appear:

1) the child will stay there until it has reached the age of 18, it cannot go to a school for severely mentally handicapped children because of its developmental level (see chapter 2),
2) the child will go to a school for (severely) mentally handicapped children when it has reached the age of 6-8, which means that it will leave the day care centre.

When a child cannot live with its family it can go to a *substitute family home* for mentally handicapped children. This home takes care of children from age 4 to 18. They live here and go to a school for (se - verely) mentally handicapped children during day time. Also at this place experts are available. Most af the time the organisation cooperates a lot with the parents.

The home is aimed at small-scaledness which means that 50 children at the maximum can live here.

A child can also go directly to an *institution* where it will stay, most of the time, for the rest of its life. Most institutions have a school as well as work and recreational alternatives. The life of a person placed at an insti- tution will mostly take place in this area.

The observational clinic is for a temporary out of home placement. It can be connected to the alternatives mentioned above. The clinic, where the mentally handicapped child can stay for some months, is aimed at ex - tensive diagnose and advise.

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In times of crisis in the family of the mentally handicapped child there is the possibility of a *"short time stay home"*. The handicapped child can stay there until the crisis in the family is over.

3.2.2 Alternatives for mentally handicapped adults

When the children have reached the age of 18 they have to leave the day care centre and the substitute family home for children. There are several continuation alternatives for the mentally handicapped adult, which will be mentioned below.

A continuation on the day care centre for children is the *day care centre* for adults. A day care centre for adults is aimed at self responsibility and integration of the (mentally) handicapped in society. A team of experts, connected to the centre, takes care of the whole development of the people coming there. The admittance criteria are broad which means that there is a large variety of (mentally) handicaps among the clients. Several activities are offered during day time.These activities may consist of party games, creative manual skills and productional activities as well as courses and after-school education. People who come to this centre live with their parents or in a substitute family home for older people.

A *substite family home* is the continuation on the substitute family home for children. It consists of houses in a specific area in a town or a village. There is place for 15 to 30 persons in one house. All inhabitants have their own room and live an independent life, to a certain extent. There is guidance available in the house. People living here visit a day care centre for adults or go to a sheltered workshop (see 3.3) during day time.

Inhabitants of a substitute family home who like to live more independently can move to an *annex*. These annexes are located on walking distance of the substitute family home. In an annex there is place for 3-6 persons, who all have their own room. The counsellors who work at the substitute family home visit the annex. The inhabitants can get 32 hours of guidance per week during the initial period of time. This can be diminished to 16 hours per week.

People can also choose for *guided living*. This is often done by inhabitants of the substitute family home. Guided living means that people live independently but can ask for assistance 3 to 6 hours per week.

As mentioned above people, children as well as adults, can live in an *institution*. An institution often looks like a small village. Nowadays people live in small groups in pavilions most of the time and not in big buildings as was normal in the old days. There are day-time activities and often there is a sheltered workshop (see 3.3). Inhabitants of an institute spend most of their time there. A team of experts is available, dealing with rehabilitation, guidance and the personal development of the people.

Within institutions there is looked for less separate living alternatives (seperated from society), as a consequence of the idea that (mentally) handicapped persons are part of society and thus have the right to take part in it. This idea is elaborated e.g. in the *"phase house"*, a house connected to the institute, where 8 persons can live in a more independent way.

Mentally handicapped adults can also go to a *"short time stay home"* (kort verblijfhuis) for adults. They can use this house for example when there are problems at home. It can also be used as a transitional stage between one living form and another. One can stay here for about 3 months.

3.3 The mentally handicapped and labour: the sheltered workshop

As mentioned in 3.2 there is the possibility for mentally handicapped adults to go to a sheltered workshop during day-time. In 1967 the Social Labour Provision Law passed in the Netherlands. This provision has been created for people who can work, but do not have the possibility or the capacity to do this under "regular" work circumstances.

The purpose of the workshop is to give people the opportunity to work in an adapted way for a salary. The labour is directed at the preservation, the recovery or the stimulation of the suitability to work.

The sheltered workshop is available for people with different problems. It is accessible for people who prefer to work but who cannot function anymore at the regular labour market, for people who have to re -

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habilitate after an accident and for persons with a (mental) handicap. There is thus a large variety between the people visiting the workshop, although there are sheltered workshops especially for mentally handi - capped persons. In 1988 80.000 persons visited the workshop. Of them 24.000 had a mental handicap (van Gemert, 1988).

Within the sheltered workshop two levels can be distinguished: the A-level and the B-level. People working at the A-level have to be able to do at least one third of a job. One third of the level that can be expected at the common labour market. People at the B-level do not have to reach the one third level but they must be able to work regularly.

There is thus a business-like way of working at the workshop. The employee gets a wage for the job. The wage at the A-level is the same as the regular minimum wage. The B-level is 75% of that. The amount of the wage depends also on the work one has done and the function one has. Mentally handicapped persons work at the B-level most of the time.

Within the workshop employees can make use of sociological training and education. Different kinds of vocational training can be followed at the workshop or at one of the so many educational institutes. One of the conditions which has to be fulfilled before one can start with a training-program is that it has to increase the ability to work or enhance adaptation to working conditions.

For the work at the workshop it is required that (van Stokkum, 1982):

1) it has to be social significant,
2) it has to provide an economical or social need,
3) it has to stimulate further development of the suitability to work of an employee,
4) the employee must not be placed in an exceptional position, the work-situation has to be as "normal" as possible.

Industrial, cultural, civil and technical jobs can be discerned. In addition there are also administrative centres and external placements. This means that employees can be placed at government institutions and sometimes in a regular company.

The work done in a workshop is partly coming from the business community, from companies who contract out parts of their production. In addition the workshop produces own products.

Before someone is placed at a sheltered workshop the person is exam - ined to see if he or she is suitable. The workshop can take someone for a trial period first.

Because of the economical recession it is not easy for mentally handi - capped persons to find a job, neither at the common market nor at a sheltered workshop. In chapter 4 this point will be further discussed.

3.4 The financing of the provisions

The organisation and the costs of the provisions mentioned above are mainly on account of the state. They can organize and finance them or subsidize private initiative. Three ministries are specially involved:
- the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Cultural Affairs,
- the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment,
- the Ministry of Education and Science.

A small amount of the money comes from private persons, donations and funds.

The financing of the care of the mentally handicapped and the accom - modations are arranged by law: the Common Law for Special Medical Expenses.

Mentally handicapped persons older then 18 are entitled to benefit from Social Service. This money is put directly on their account, or is given to the the institute in which the person lives. Mentally handicapped persons who combine a job with one of the living-provisions have to give up a part of their salary for the payment of this provision.

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4 SOME CRITICAL NOTES

The structure of special education in The Netherlands is complex. It is meant to provide sufficient assistance to different pupils with different needs. A lot of positive things can be said about it, there are a lot of good functioning and pleasant schools and a great amount of pupils feel happy there.

The same positive things can be mentioned with regard to the living- and daycare alternatives for mentally handicapped persons.

Despite all these positive things, special education and the living and daycare alternatives for (mentally) handicapped persons get a lot of pub - lic attention these days.

In this final chapter I will try to show why this is the case. In 4.1 I will do this with respect to special education and in 4.2 with regard to the liv- ing-and daycare alternatives.

4.1 Critical comments on special education

Within the discussion concerning special education a distinction can be made between the discussion pointed at the structure of the system and the difficulties experienced within it.

4.1.1 Some remarks aimed at the structure of special education

The structure of special education with its 15 different schooltypes is ac - tually a point of discussion since the seventies. The division into the 15 different types is mainly based on the medical model, in which a physical deficit is at focus. The discussion now, is pointed at the question if this is a right point of departure for an educational system. Would it not be bet- ter to start from a more educational and pedagogical point of view in which the pedagogical and educational needs of the pupil serve as a focus?

In recent years scientific research has been done to analyse if there are pedagogical and educational similarities between the different special schools and if there are opportunities to merge (some of) them. Espe - cially the schools for LOM, MLK and ZMOK (see chapter 2) have been examined on these issues. The results are optimistic.

Another point of discussion is made up by the stigmatizing function the placement in special education would have for the pupil. Once labeled as "not able to follow regular (ordinary) education" it is very difficult to loose this negative label during the rest of the pupil's life. Scientific res - ults diverge as far as this is concerned.

4.1.2 Problems experienced within the special educational system

As a result of the specialized system it can be difficult to place a pupil at the right school. Placement takes place after the main problems of the pu- pil are known. However, a pupil with multiple, complicated problems can arrive at the situation that he/she does not really fit in any special school. In addition to that there is a lack of clear placement criteria.

What can be mentioned as serious problem the last ten years is the growth of special education. At first this was seen as something positive, giving education that fits the pupil. Nowadays one realises the negative consequences too.

A part of the growth can be explained because of the fact that pupils come into contact with special education at an earlier age and stay there longer on average, compared to some years ago. About the how and why concerning the whole growth, there are a lot of different opinions. Is education a mirror of society in which professionalism and performance are getting increasingly important and which form a reason to place the "not-good functioning pupil" apart? Are there problems in regular edu - cation which makes it difficult to take care of the more problematic pupils?

Whatever the reason, a lot of efforts are made to stop it, as well for economical reasons as for more ideological and educational onces. New concepts as "growth control" (coming from the political corner) and "care broadening" (originating from the science and education itself) have appeared. Also a better cooperation between special and regular

education is urged, in a way they can support each other and get a more flexible attitude towards more temporary placements (which is not much the case at the moment).

As a consequence of this development waiting lists have arisen. The schools for special education are so crowded at the moment that not everyone can get a place. This means that some of the pupils on the waiting-list do not go to school and have to wait at home until a place is available. Of course this causes a lot of protest. Even legal steps are taken by parents and organisations for handicapped persons to fight this accord- ing to the statements that everyone has the right to go to school and that education is compulsory for children from age 5 to 16.

Remarkable is also the growing amount of pupils with different etnic background (other than Dutch) in special education. The question has arisen if at least some of this pupils are not referred too soon to special education. It can be the case that some of them have more cultural and language problems which make it difficult to follow education in general. Some of them could have been placed at a special school for wrong reasons.

Also the differences in numbers between boys and girls in special schools can be mentioned as interesting (see chapter 2). Although it is tempting to conclude that girls are smarter than boys this can not be used as an explanation. Unequivocal opinions do not exist about this point. Often heard however, is the explanation of differences in role patterns. Boys would be more noisy as they experience problems in school and thus get more and sooner attention. Whereas girls would be more silent as they experience problems and thus get less attention because they do not cause troubles in the classroom.

Since the economical recession of the last years the government has looked very sharply to possibilities for cutbacks. This can be noticed within the whole educational area. Less money is available, with the con - sequence that less teachers can be hired and classes grow. Also the salary and the status of teachers decrease with the result that a shortage of teachers will probably appear in the next years.

Because of the cutbacks and continuous changes in rules, unrest in the schools has grown and the workingload of the teachers increased.

4.2 Some remarks concerning the living and daycare alternatives for mentally handicapped persons

In these provisions there is also a shortage of places. There are long waiting lists and people with an urgent need for placement are forced to sit at home with the family. It is clear that this can cause a lot of prob - lems as well for the involved person as for the family.

Because of the shortage of places in special education as well as in the living- and daycare possibilities (e.g.workshops, institutions, family sub - stituted homes) there is a blockage within the care for (mentally) handi - capped persons, with all its consequences.

Pupils stay at a special school as a guest pupil after the maximum age is reached because the continuation alternatives are not available. This hampers the entrance of new pupils to the special school. Some inhabitants of a substitute family home are also during day-time at home (although this home is not made for this) because there are no places available at the workshops or the day care centres for adults.

A negative result of the blockage can be that a mentally handicapped person looses the capabilities she/he learned at school because these can - not be practised any longer.

The blockage can be explained partly because of the fact that there is a structural shortage of places. Next to that, the users are ageing: Also (mentally) handicapped persons grow older nowadays, which means that they use the alternatives longer and which in return makes the turnover smaller.

As an answer to this a more flexible way of using the alternatives is considered called "care that fits" or "care on size". This means that the care must be tuned more to the individual needs of the care user, for example by giving someone a part-time place instead of a full-time if he/she wants to. This makes it possible for two persons instead of one to use one place

Furthermore all kind of projects have been started for the retired mentally retarded and the "homesitters", for whom there is no place avail - able.

The sheltered workshop makes another problem. As mentioned before there is a more bussiness-like way of dealing within it nowadays. As a result mentally handicapped people do not fit in so well anymore. The

ex-MLK pupil (see chapter 2) of whom it was expected to function well at the common labour market, has taken over the place of the ex-ZMLK pu- pil at the workshop which means that the latter is not so popular any more. It is very difficult for them to find an alternative job.

With this report I have tried to give a view on the educational possib - ilities of mentally handicapped persons and the alternatives after school. I have tried to show how special education is embedded in the educational system of The Netherlands and pointed out some of the problems con - cerning it. If you have questions after reading this report please contact us:

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Abstract card

Hettinga, C. A.-M. Education in the Netherlands. An outline of regular and special education focusing the situation of pupils and adults with disabilities. *Educational and Psychological Interactions* (Malmö, Sweden: School of Education), No. 107, 1991.

As a part of two research projects on schools for the mentally retarded and the labour market investigations on parallel situations in other countries are carried out. In this report the school system in the Netherlands is described including both regular and special education. Since the projects also are studying the situation after school, a description of living conditions for adults with disabilities is included. The report also offers a critical standpoint on segregative features both within and outside the school system.

Keywords: Disabilities, mental retardation, the Netherlands, school systems, special education, work-life.

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